

Evening Telegraph

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FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 1866.

Congressional Caning—A Modern Republican Tournament.

"SIR PERCY DE COUBRY reined up his fiery steed, hurled his mailed glove on the arena, and bade his trumpet sound defiance to all who denied that he was 'good knight and true, and one whose lady...' was the fairest in the land." Such was the mode of courting a rencontre in the barbaric days of the feudal ages. It is an opposing warrior appeared, took up the glove, and met the champion, the Court sat round, the beauties of the land came eagerly to applaud the victor, and he whose lance point first pierced his enemy's mail was crowned by fair hands and hailed as the pride of chivalry. But such a custom prevailed only in the dark days of the past, ere the light of civilization had illumined the intellect, and before we had reduced to a science the mode of giving and receiving an insult. We are thankful that enlightened America has never witnessed so absurd a spectacle. Why should such pomp and heralry surround the settlement of a difficulty? We want no romance; we want practical.

The perfection of contest is found in the Southwest. A modern traveller gives us an account of a practical tournament which he witnessed in Texas, and which is stripped of all the useless insignia of the chivalric times. "It was passing by a little wood, he, 'when my attention was attracted by groans and struggles in a neighboring glade. I hastened to the spot, and saw two contestants rolling on the ground, while four or five friends stood round as witnesses. Suddenly one of the contestants got the uppermost, seized his foe by the throat, and deliberately gouged out one of his eyes. The Cyclops, by a terrible effort, overmastered his enemy, and sent six of his molars down his throat to try his digestion. The fight then ended by mutual consent."

But the cheerful process which prevails in the sweet wildwoods of the West cannot be expected to succeed where we are trammelled by the tradition of honor as practised in the Old World. Hence we have adopted a system as near the "simon pure" as possible. If a gentleman is insulted, we hear no more of steeds and armor, nor yet of the order, "pistols and coffee for two;" but the injured man violently abuses his insulter, and seeks to induce him to strike the first blow. If he fails, he selects a convenient opportunity, lays in wait for his traducer, and breaks a small cane over his back. As they are both immediately arrested and bound over to keep the peace, all danger of being held accountable vanishes.

We have been led to these remarks by the little rencontre which enlivened the monotony of legislation yesterday. General LOVELL H. ROUSSAULT saw fit to subject Mr. JOSIAH B. GRINNELL to the chastisement of a caning. The facts are given in all the papers. The cause of the assault was that Mr. GRINNELL insulted the General in the House on Monday last. Now, what constitutes an American insult is peculiar. The nicety of the distinction reminds us of a story told by SIDNEY SMITH:—Traveling in Ireland, he came across a young man and a female from Billingsgate in hot controversy. The youth tried hard to equal his opponent in abusive epithets. But she far excelled him, giving far more than she took. At last, in desperation, he looked at her with dignified scorn, and bided out:—"You are a geometrical hexamer, an equilateral triangle, yes, I will add, a quadrilateral." "I have often been cursed and insulted," replied the Amazon, "but never such as this," and she rushed wildly to commit an assault and battery. Such is the Congressional code of respect. You can tell a man that he willfully misrepresents facts, that he is a political charlatan, a receiver of bribes, and a sycophant, and you commit no offense, but term him a coward and a miscreant, and your doom is sealed. Such was the fate of Mr. GRINNELL. He overstepped those mysterious bounds. Mr. GRINNELL called ROUSSAULT a "brazen defender" and a "pitiful demagogue," but this could pass. He even sneered at his bravery, and insinuated that he was a coward. That might have been forgiven; but then "horrors on horrors heaped accumulate!" He actually termed the honorable gentleman a "rabbit!" He might as well have called him a quadrilateral, and of course that could not be forgiven. The result was that Mr. GRINNELL was caned.

There is one peculiarity in the affair which is noticeable. The assault was not committed until four days after the insult. Every opportunity epithet was used on Monday, and yet GRINNELL went unharmed until Thursday. Can it be that the old anecdote is applicable which tells us of a highly indignant man who, turning on his insulter, thundered forth, "Twice you've kicked me, sir! three times you've smacked my mouth, now beware of a sixth offense!" And Mr. GRINNELL must have been indeed guilty of a sixth offense.

The assault concludes the episode, as though the whole narrative had gradually advanced until it reached a climax. The opening stage of the contest was amusing. Mr. ROUSSAULT hurled the epithet of sycophant at General ROUSSAULT, and the General sought the first opportunity to hurl it back. "I spit upon Cromwell!" remarked an enraged Tory. "And I spit upon GEORGE III," replied the Liberal. "Waiter, spittoons for two," shouted DOUGLASS JEROME. And if a JEROME had been in the House, he might have naturally assisted the bullying by adding "slung snuffers for two." Such is our American mode of producing a personal collision, one at once ridiculous in the actors and contemptible in the eyes of the world. To speak with all soberness, we had hoped that the nonsense and disgrace of such brutal exhibitions had passed out of our history. It is an insult to our country that Representatives should thus seek to settle personal difficulties like pugilists, and agree to know no other code of honor than that in vogue in the fertile district of Boro-Boolah-Glu.

Will the Southern States Accept the Situation?

There is no doubt that there will be a strong disposition on the part of many, if not most of the Southern States, to accept the Constitutional amendment just proposed by Congress, as a final settlement of the questions left to us as a legacy by the Rebellion. The leading minds in that section of the country are perfectly conscious that the nation has passed through a tremendous struggle, and that certain changes in the organic law must be made to meet the new condition of affairs. They cannot expect, after appealing to the arbitration of war, to find their own status the same as it was before the Rebellion. Of course, they will strive for what they consider the best attainable terms; but they know very well that some terms will be required as conditions precedent to their admission into the Union. We believe they will be inclined to accept those proposed by Congress. There is nothing in those terms that cannot be honorably accepted by the South. There is nothing in them that will militate in the least against the future growth and power of the South. They merely require the people there to accept in good faith the results of the war.

The only thing which can cause the South to attempt to thwart the clearly expressed will of the nation, will be the position of the leaders of the so-called Democratic party. They will doubtless oppose the proposed measures of settlement and conciliation, as they have opposed every previous measure adopted by the nation during the struggle. But we trust the Southern people are beginning to see the folly of being led any longer by these blind guides. It was the encouragement of those men that emboldened the Southern fire-eaters to precipitate war upon the country. They utterly misrepresented the public sentiment of the North, as the South soon found to its sorrow. So, during the entire progress of the war, these Democratic leaders continued to mislead the South, holding out to it false hopes and promises of a popular reaction against the war at the North. Depending on these misrepresentations, the South was led to prolong the contest long after she would otherwise have been inclined to give it up; and thus in the end she experienced a more complete and disastrous overthrow. Again, at the present time, the Democratic leaders are misleading the South, holding out to her false hopes, encouraging her in demands that are preposterous and will never be conceded—misrepresenting again the popular sentiment of the North, and leading the Southern people away from their true interests.

The truth is—and it is true our Southern brethren understood it—the Copperhead leaders of the Democratic organization have behaved with such unmeasured folly and wickedness, during the past five years, that they have run their party into the ground. They are reduced to a powerless minority in every Northern State, and in the most of them do not constitute even a respectable faction. In Congress they are unable to muster a fourth of the votes of either House. Their doctrines are abandoned by the masses of the people, and they have secured for themselves a degree of popular odium unusual in any country. If the Southern people suppose they will make anything by any longer following this played-out, used-up, broken-down faction of political bankrupts, they are very much mistaken.

The popular sentiment of the North is represented by the great Union party. It is never more compact, vigorous, and powerful than to-day. Its informing ideas are daily more thoroughly permeating the masses. It has the prestige of victory on its banners. Its leaders are men of the people, who understand the people. It is the party of progress. Its liberal and inspiring doctrines are in harmony with the enlightened spirit of the age; they attract to it the young, the enthusiastic, the progressive. It is the party of the future as well as of the present. This is the party with which our Southern brethren must treat. It represents the people, and it wields the power of the people. The measures it proposes carry with them the sanction of authority. There is on the part of this great organization no desire to wrong the South—no desire even to exact the demands of justice; but there is a determination, inflexible and uncompromising, that, in admitting the late Rebel States to power in the Union, the safety and peace of the nation shall be secured by ample and irrevocable guarantees. The sooner our Southern brethren understand this, the better will it be for all parties.

Important if True.

"DAVID," the notorious correspondent of the New York Daily News, writes to that journal from Washington, under date of the 13th, that the President has already written an order for the release of JEFFERSON DAVIS on parole, and that it will be immediately forwarded to General MILLS, the officer in command at Fortress Monroe. He goes into a long explanation of the matter, but the gist of it all is that the President has finally come to the conclusion that DAVIS can only be held as a "prisoner of war"—the late war having passed at an early date from the character of a "rebellion" into that of a "civil war," so that those who engaged in it cannot be justly charged with treason.

This is the same ground, essentially, as that taken a few days since by GERRIT SMITH, in a published letter to Chief Justice CHASE. We put no great reliance in these outpourings from Washington. We think it much more likely that Mr. DAVIS will stay where he is.

Mr. Harris' Speech.

The notorious BENVENUE G. HARRIS, of Maryland, aired his "views" yesterday in the House of Representatives. He declared himself an old line Democrat, believing in the doctrine of secession, believing that the several States of the Union have the right to separate from it, each acting for itself. After shedding some "natural tears" over the fate of Mrs. SCRANTON, etc., he returned to the question of the right of secession, and said that that doctrine was born with the Constitution, and became a ruling principle of the Democratic party, being inserted in its platform from 1798 to the late war. After HARRIS had finished, Mr. LE BLOND, of Ohio, rose and protested, "in the name of the Democratic party," against the doctrines of Mr. HARRIS. Where he got any better authority to speak for the party than Mr. HARRIS had, he did not tell.

THE NEW YORK SENATE is now in session for the trial of Judge SMITH, of Oneida county, charged with malfeasance in office. The Constitution of New York provides for the removal

of inferior judicial officers by the Senate on recommendation of the Governor. This is the first case that has arisen, and creates no little interest. The charge against the Judge grows out of matters connected with bounty funds during the war.

It is stated that Governor CURTIN has addressed a circular letter to the Governors of the loyal States, suggesting the calling together of their Legislatures for action upon the Constitutional amendment. We have no doubt the suggestion will be promptly acted upon, and that the amendment will be ratified by all the loyal States before the adjournment of Congress.

IMPORTANT STATEMENT.

Mr. Lincoln and the Rebel Legislature of Virginia. His Telegram to General Weitzel. Card from the Hon. Edward McPherson.

To the Editor of the N. Y. Tribune. Sir:—Your Richmond correspondent of the 6th has noted and commented upon the fact that Mr. Lincoln's telegram to General Weitzel, forbidding the assembling of Rebel Legislatures and others in April of last year, has never been published. It is a document of historic interest, both for its subject-matter and for the fact that it was the last telegram sent by Mr. Lincoln.

Some weeks ago, I obtained from Mr. Secretary Stanton a copy for my forthcoming political manual of 1866, from the private files of which I have the pleasure of extracting it:— OFFICE U. S. MILITARY TELEGRAPH, WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., April 12, 1865. Major-General Weitzel, Richmond, Va.:—I have just seen Judge Campbell's letter to you of the 7th. He assumes, as appears to me, that I have called the insurgent Legislature of Virginia together, as the rightful Legislature of the State, to settle all differences with the United States. I have done so, and I am sure that you, as a Legislature, but as 'the gentlemen' you have acted as the Legislature of Virginia in support of the Rebellion. I did this on purpose to excite the assumption that I was recognizing them as a 'rightful' body. I dealt with them as men having no other duty to do than to support the Government, and I am sure that you, as a Legislature, but as 'the gentlemen' you have acted as the Legislature of Virginia in support of the Rebellion. I did this on purpose to excite the assumption that I was recognizing them as a 'rightful' body. I dealt with them as men having no other duty to do than to support the Government, and I am sure that you, as a Legislature, but as 'the gentlemen' you have acted as the Legislature of Virginia in support of the Rebellion. I did this on purpose to excite the assumption that I was recognizing them as a 'rightful' body. I dealt with them as men having no other duty to do than to support the Government, and I am sure that you, as a Legislature, but as 'the gentlemen' you have acted as the Legislature of Virginia in support of the Rebellion. I did this on purpose to excite the assumption that I was recognizing them as a 'rightful' body. 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